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Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations[1]

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Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations

Views and recommendations with regard to issues related to taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations

Submitted by the Islamic Republic of Iran

I. Introduction

1. This paper contains the main views and recommendations of the Islamic Republic of Iran in regard to issues related to taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, including "concrete effective legal measures and provisions to attain and maintain a nuclear-weapon-free-world", "measures that could contribute to taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations", "transparency measures related to the risks associated with existing nuclear weapons", "measures to reduce and eliminate the risk of accidental, mistaken, unauthorized or intentional nuclear weapon detonations", and "measures to increase awareness and understanding of the complexity of and interrelationship between the wide range of humanitarian consequences that would result from any nuclear weapon detonation".

II. Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations

2. Nuclear weapons are the most horrendous weapons ever made. They are unique in their destructive power; in the unspeakable human suffering they cause; in the impossibility of controlling their effects in time and space; and in the threat they pose to the environment, to future generations, and indeed to the survival of humanity. For such reasons, in the view of the Islamic Republic of Iran, there is no absolute guarantee against the threat or use of nuclear weapons other than their total elimination. This is a 71-year-old strong global demand and, since the entry into force of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in 1970, is a 46-year-old explicit legal obligation, the accomplishment of which is

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neither conditional nor optional. Nuclear disarmament is an obligation that cannot be replaced, either by nuclear weapon reductions and the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, or by any other arrangement or mechanism short of the total, irreversible and internationally verifiable elimination of all nuclear weapons globally in accordance with a universal legally binding instrument that also assures they will never be produced again.

3. The Islamic Republic of Iran strongly believes that the main purpose of the Non-Proliferation Treaty is to ensure, through preventing the non-nuclear-weapon States from acquiring nuclear weapons and disarming nuclear-weapon States, that no one have nuclear weapons. Accordingly, the Islamic Republic of Iran continues to strongly reject, and to consider incompatible with the object and purpose of the Treaty, any assumption that the indefinite extension of the Treaty implies the indefinite possession by the nuclear-weapon States of their nuclear arsenals or they are legitimately held weapons. The Islamic Republic of Iran asserts that, as unanimously concluded by the International Court of Justice in its advisory opinion, taking all necessary practical measures for the total elimination of all nuclear weapons worldwide, including to pursue in "good faith" and "bring to a conclusion negotiations" leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control, is a legal obligation to which all States Parties of the Non-Proliferation Treaty are committed under its Article VI.

4. The Islamic Republic of Iran believes that the main challenge of nuclear disarmament is the lack of genuine political will by the nuclear-weapon States to fulfil their legal obligations under article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and implement their unequivocal undertakings to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals. A fair and realistic assessment of the actual results of policies, efforts, decisions, initiatives and other measures, on nuclear disarmament, at the unilateral, bilateral, regional, and international levels, indicates that, in the absence of a strong genuine political will by the nuclear-weapon States, even the adoption of the most practical decisions, action plans, and above all, having in place a universal legally binding instrument, will not lead the international community of States to a nuclear-weapon-free world. Current lack of genuine political will by the nuclear-weapon States, definitely will add to already existing frustration of the non-nuclear-weapon States, and gradually erode the validity and credibility of the Treaty, lessen its effectiveness, and negatively impact the international peace and security, which certainly is not in the common interest of the present and future generations. Accordingly, The Islamic Republic of Iran is of the view that the urgent fulfilment of obligations under article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty is an urgent task and highly imperative.

III. Concrete effective legal measures and provisions to attain and maintain a nuclear-weapon-free world

5. While expressing deep disappointment over the lack of tangible progress so far in the implementation of the obligations under article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and the unequivocal commitments under the 13 practical steps for the systematic and progressive efforts to implement Article VI of the Treaty and the 2010 action plan on nuclear disarmament, the Islamic Republic of Iran underlines the continued validity of all such obligations and commitments until all their objectives are achieved. The Islamic Republic of Iran strongly believes that the lack of practical progress on the fulfilment of such obligations and the unequivocal commitments cannot continue indefinitely, and therefore, their implementation should be time bound, defined by taking into account the long delay in their fulfilment and the urgent need for their full implementation.

6. The Islamic Republic of Iran acknowledges the strong support, expressed at the first ever high-level meeting of the United Nations General Assembly on nuclear disarmament,

on 26 September 2013, for taking urgent and effective measures to achieve the total elimination of nuclear weapons, as well as the "urgent compliance with the legal obligations and the fulfilment of the commitments undertaken on nuclear disarmament". In this regard, the Islamic Republic of Iran underscores that the United Nations General Assembly, through its resolutions 68/32, 69/38 and 70/34, has repeatedly called upon all States to urgently commence the negotiations, in the Conference on Disarmament, for the early conclusion of a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons to prohibit their possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use and to provide for their destruction. The Islamic Republic of Iran strongly holds that such a comprehensive convention is the only practical way and the best concrete effective legal framework required for achieving and maintaining a nuclear-weapon-free-world.

IV. Measures that could contribute to taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations

7. Taking into account the longstanding strong international demand for the total elimination of nuclear weapons worldwide, the Islamic Republic of Iran believes that the only main challenge of multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations is the lack of genuine political will by the nuclear-weapon States to fulfil their legal obligations under article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and implement their unequivocal undertakings to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals. Therefore, in regard to the lack of progress in multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, one should not point the finger at the relevant institutions, as they have accomplished, with the same structure and rules of procedure, considerable achievements in the past. In this context, the Islamic Republic of Iran believes that the international community should continue to urge all nuclear-weapon States to demonstrate strong genuine political will to advance multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations in the fulfilment of their legal obligations to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control. In so doing, the international community is advised to take advantage of the momentum on nuclear disarmament, created, inter alia, by the first ever high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament, on 26 September 2013, the annual high-level meetings of the General Assembly in 2014 and 2015 to observe the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, as well as the three conferences on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, in 2013 and 2014.

V. Transparency measures related to the risks associated with existing nuclear weapons

8. While underlining, once again, that there is no absolute guarantee against the threat or use of nuclear weapons other than their total elimination, the Islamic Republic of Iran stresses that no measure can replace the total, irreversible and internationally verifiable elimination of all nuclear weapons. However, pending such a time, there is a strong need for taking all necessary measures to reduce the risks associated with existing nuclear weapons. However, in the view of the Islamic Republic of Iran, measures to reduce such risks are not confined to "transparency measures" only. Therefore, the role and relevance of other measures in reducing the risks associated with existing nuclear weapons should not be underestimated.

9. In this context, the Islamic Republic of Iran believes that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in different parts of the world can contribute to reducing the risks associated with existing nuclear weapons. However, they are not a substitute for the total elimination of nuclear weapons worldwide. They should be considered incomplete

unless and until the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free world. At the same time, the effectiveness of such zones can be promoted through granting, by all nuclear-weapon States, of full, effective, non-discriminatory, unconditional and irrevocable legally binding security assurances to all the parties to treaties establishing these zones against the threat or use of nuclear weapons under all circumstances. Moreover, the establishment of such zones in certain parts of the world, including in particular, the Middle East is of outmost importance. Taking into account the fact that the refusal of the Israeli regime to participate in the implementation of the resolutions and decisions on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East is the only obstacle for the realization of such a zone, the international community should continue to exert outmost pressure on this regime to compel it to accede, without any precondition or further delay, to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, as a non-nuclear-weapon party, and to place all of its nuclear facilities and activities under the comprehensive safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency. It should be recalled that, the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty was regrettably unable to adopt a final document due only to the refusal of Israel to accept the implementation of the 1995 resolution and the 2010 plan of action on the Middle East, as reflected in the unwillingness of certain nuclear-weapon States to support the adoption of such an outcome document.

10. Moreover, taking into account the serious security threat that the existence of thousands of nuclear weapons continues to pose to the very survival of humankind, and the fact that as long as such weapons exist, the risk of their possible use or threat of use persists, and thus, the total elimination is the only absolute guarantee against their use or threat of use, and taking into account the fact that current frameworks to provide security assurances are very limited, conditional and insufficient, there is a dire need, pending the realization of this objective and as an interim measure only, to grant to all non-nuclear-weapon States parties to Non-Proliferation Treaty, effective, universal, unconditional, non-discriminatory and irrevocable legally binding security assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under all circumstances.

11. Additionally, preventing terrorist groups from developing, acquiring, manufacturing, possessing, transporting, transferring or using nuclear weapons is among the important measures that can contribute to reducing the risks associated with existing nuclear weapons.

12. Likewise, ceasing all efforts to upgrade existing nuclear weapons or to research on and develop new types of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices and their means of delivery, as well as not to conduct nuclear-weapon test explosions or any other nuclear explosions, and nuclear-weapon tests in alternative ways, including subcritical nuclear tests or computer simulated nuclear explosions and to close and dismantle any sites for nuclear-test explosions and their associated infrastructure, are among the measures that can contribute to reducing the risks associated with existing nuclear weapons.

13. Similarly, reducing the operational status of nuclear weapons, including through complete de-targeting and de-alerting, as well excluding the role of any type of nuclear weapons in the security strategies, concepts, policies or doctrines of all nuclear-weapon States are among the measures that can reduce the risks associated with existing nuclear weapons.

14. As regards the specific transparency measures, the Islamic Republic of Iran believes that taking, inter alia, the following measure by all nuclear-weapon States can also contribute to reducing the risks associated with existing nuclear weapons:

(a) To publish regular updates about the number, types, destructive power, status and place of their nuclear weapons, as well as the number and type of their delivery vehicles;

(b) To publish regular updates about the plans, expenditures and number of facilities related to the modernization of nuclear weapons, as well as the amount of their fissile material for military purposes;

(c) To release all information related to the measures they have taken aimed at reducing the risks associated with existing nuclear weapons; and

(d) To conclude safeguards agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency for enabling the Agency to verify the fulfilment of their nuclear disarmament obligations, including to prevent further diversion of nuclear material from peaceful uses to nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices and to place under the Agency safeguards fissile materials transferred from military programmes.

VI. Measures to reduce and eliminate the risk of accidental, mistaken, unauthorized or intentional nuclear weapon detonations

15. This is a fact that our planet still is heavily booby-trapped with thousands of nuclear warheads and unless they are eliminated completely, they will almost certainly be used again, either intentionally or by accident, and in either case the consequences will be catastrophic, since the existing nuclear weapons have destructive power enough to transform the Earth into a dead planet. Tens of mishaps that might have started accidental nuclear war and other nuclear-weapon accidents - many of which remain unknown to the public - confirm this assessment. Therefore, reducing and eliminating the risk of accidental, mistaken, unauthorized or intentional nuclear weapon detonations is an urgent task.

16. To that end, the Islamic Republic of Iran believes that all nuclear-weapon States should be urged to take, as a matter of priority, all necessary measures, including the following, to reduce and eliminate the risk of accidental, mistaken, unauthorized or intentional nuclear weapon detonations:

(a) To undertake all efforts necessary to comprehensively address the risks of unintended nuclear detonations, including, but not limited to, protection of command and control systems against potential cyber threats;

(b) To reduce the operational status of nuclear weapons, including through complete de-targeting and de-alerting, as well excluding the role of any type of nuclear weapons in their security strategies, concepts, policies or doctrines;

(c) To take all necessary measures to prevent the theft or loss of nuclear-weapon related materials;

(d) To refrain from transferring their nuclear-weapons beyond their national borders; and

(e) To end nuclear-weapon-sharing under any arrangements.

VII. Measures to increase awareness about humanitarian consequences of any nuclear weapon detonation

17. The Islamic Republic of Iran strongly holds that to have all kinds of information about the economic, political, security, environmental and above all humanitarian consequences of the nuclear weapons and their possible detonation is the right of each and every individual in our planet, and States have the responsibility to take necessary measures for the fulfilment of this right. At the same time, the Islamic Republic of Iran believes that awareness of the peoples around the world about the facts and figures related to the overall consequences of the nuclear weapons, in particular their possible detonation, is an essential

asset, a powerful driving force and a valuable support to pursue the objective of a total elimination of nuclear weapons. In this regard, the Islamic Republic of Iran supports the role of civil society, including non-governmental organizations, academia, parliamentarians and the mass media, in advancing this objective.

18. In this context, the Islamic Republic of Iran fully acknowledges the importance of 26 September of every year which is declared, by the General Assembly in its resolution 68/32, "as the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons devoted to furthering this objective, including through enhancing public awareness and education about the threat posed to humanity by nuclear weapons and the necessity for their total elimination, in order to mobilize international efforts towards achieving the common goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world". Likewise, the Islamic Republic of Iran underlines the importance of the three conferences on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, in 2013 and 2014, in raising awareness about different humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapon detonation. Consequently, the Islamic Republic of Iran is of the view that all States need to enhance public awareness about the threat of nuclear weapons, including the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapon detonation, in particular through continued observance of 26 September as the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. In addition, the Islamic Republic of Iran supports the continuation of holding conferences on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons. Furthermore, the Islamic Republic of Iran encourages civil society, academia, parliamentarians and the mass media to continue enhancing public awareness and education about the threat posed to humanity by nuclear weapons and the necessity for their total elimination. Finally, informing the public about the number, types and destructive power of nuclear weapons and consequences of any possible nuclear weapon detonation on different aspects of life of the peoples can be the main element of such activities.